



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 6210.5 - Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, Western Australia, October 2010

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## Summary

### Main Features

#### NOTES

#### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication contains results from the **Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey** conducted in Western Australia (WA) in October 2010. It presents information on employees' personal work preferences, and access to flexible working arrangements. For those identified as being not in the labour force, data includes reasons for cessation of employment and conditions required for their return to, or commencement of, work.

Data items were collected from Any Responsible Adult (ARA) on behalf of the household. A full data item list is available in the Appendix.

#### ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was conducted as a supplement to the ABS Monthly Labour Force Survey. Refer to the Explanatory Notes at the back of this publication for further details about this survey.

#### INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

## Summary of findings

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION

This publication presents the results of the **Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey** conducted in October 2010. Demographic change, particularly an ageing workforce, may result in declining workforce participation rates.

The focus of the survey was to provide information on attracting and retaining employees, including the factors that influence decisions to participate in the labour force. For employees, the survey collected information about work preferences, existing provisions for workplace flexibility and the utilisation of flexible working arrangements.

The survey was conducted as a supplement to the ABS Labour Force Survey. The Labour Force Survey comprises persons aged 15 years and over in the following groups, according to standard labour force definitions:

- Labour Force
  - employed - employers, self employed or employees
  - unemployed - currently not employed but actively looking for paid work or waiting to start a new job.
- Not in the labour force - neither employed nor unemployed and includes those who are on long term unpaid leave, i.e. have been away from a job for four weeks or more and have not been paid for any part of that absence.

See Explanatory Notes for more information

## **SURVEY POPULATION**

Excluded from the survey population were persons in the Labour Force Survey population who were:

- aged 15-17 years
- unemployed
- permanently unable to work
- aged 65 years and over and not intending to work
- employers, or own account workers
- full time students under 25 years of age.

There are two categories of people remaining:

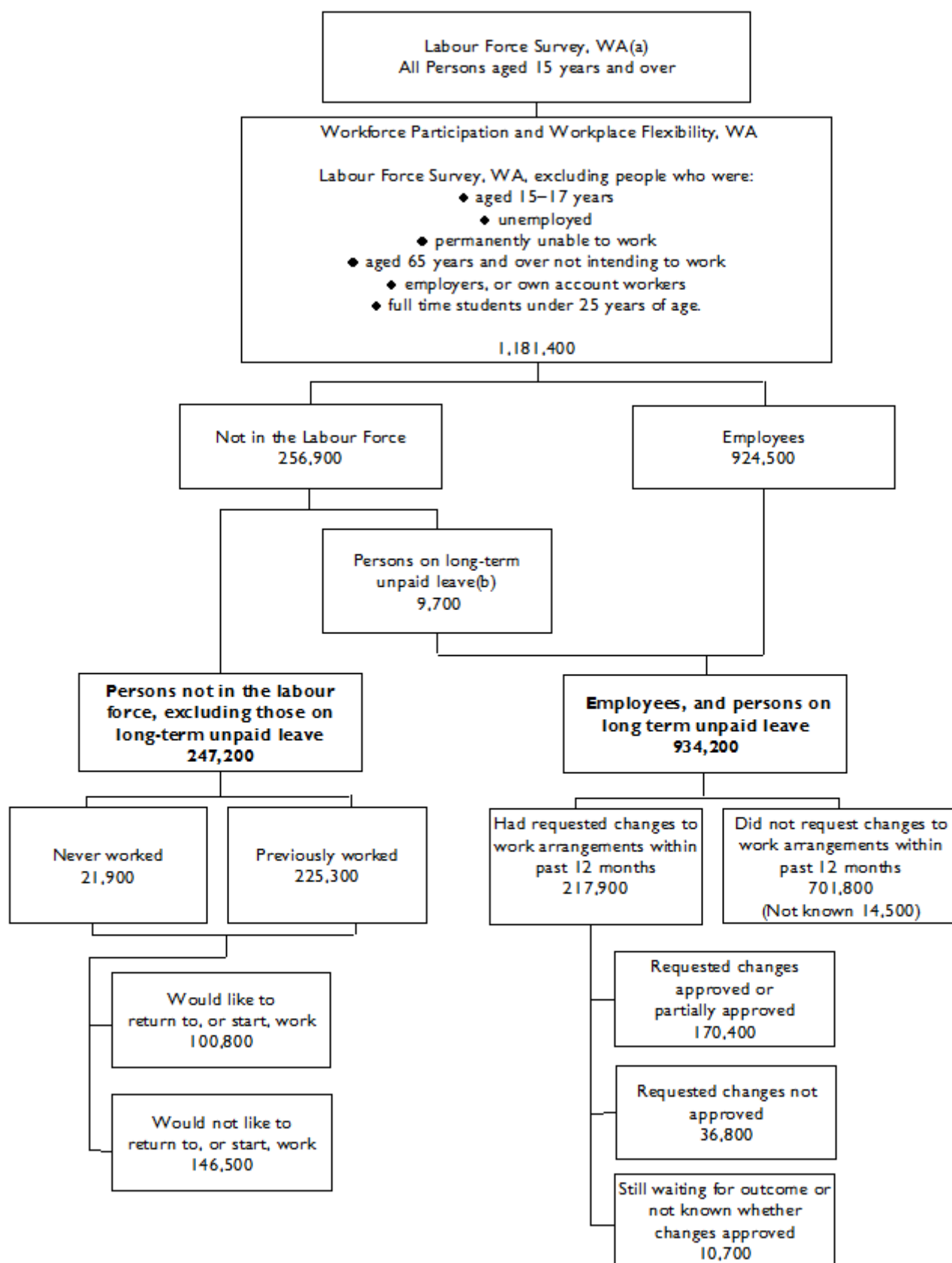
- employees
- persons not in the labour force.

For the purposes of this publication, the 'not in the labour force' population has been split into two groups:

- Persons not in the labour force who were on long term unpaid leave
- Persons not in the labour force who were not on long term unpaid leave.

Data for persons not in the labour force who were on long term unpaid leave have been combined with the data of employees, resulting in the following sub-populations:

- Employees, and persons on long term unpaid leave
- Persons not in the labour force, excluding those on long term unpaid leave.



(a) See Explanatory Notes for Labour Force Survey exclusions

(b) Away from a job for four weeks or more without pay

## SURVEY POPULATION OVERVIEW

In October 2010, there were an estimated 1,181,400 people aged 18 years and over in scope for the survey (Table 1). Approximately 79% (934,200 people) were employees or

persons on long term unpaid leave. The remaining 247,200 were persons not in the labour force (excluding those on long term unpaid leave) (Table 1).

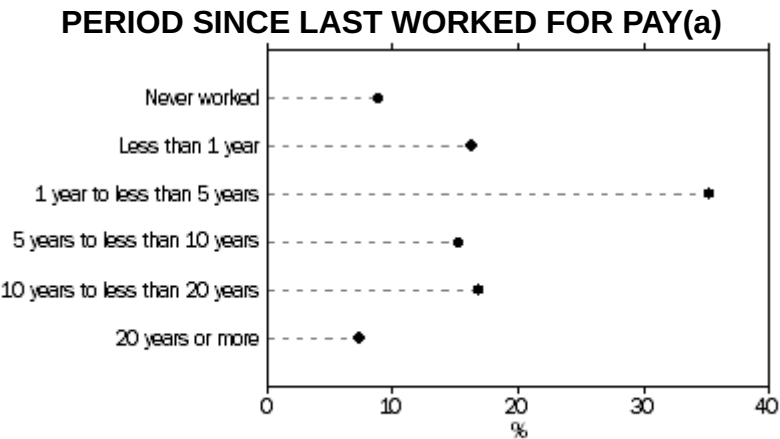
**PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, EXCLUDING THOSE ON LONG TERM UNPAID LEAVE**

**Demographic characteristics**

At the time of the survey, 76% (186,700) of persons not in the labour force (excluding those on long term unpaid leave) were female. More than one in three (36%) were aged 55 years or over, 30% were living in households with a child aged 0-4 years present, and 38% were living in households where the equivalised annual household income was less than \$25,000. By comparison, 6% of employees and persons on long term unpaid leave were living in households where the equivalised household income was less than \$25,000 (Table 1). Equivalised household income is gross household income adjusted for household size and composition and allows for comparison between different household types (See Explanatory Notes).

**Previous employment**

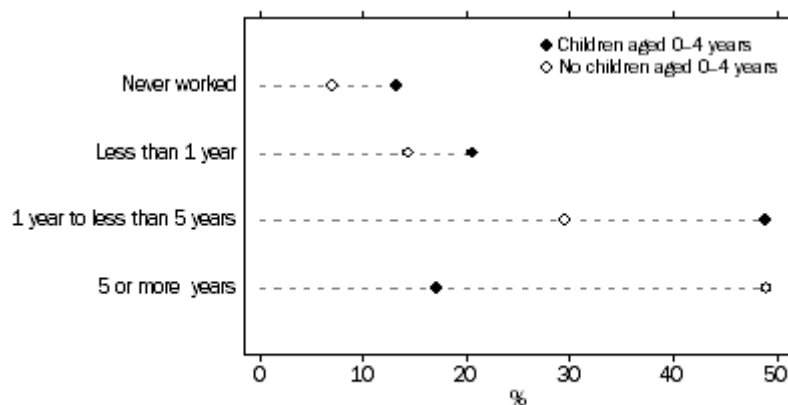
The vast majority (91% or 225,300) of persons not in the labour force (excluding those on long term unpaid leave) had previously worked for pay in a job or business for a duration of two weeks or more. About 40% (97,700) last worked for pay 5 or more years ago, 35% (87,300) between 1 and 5 years ago, and 16% (40,300) in the last year (Table 2).



(a) Worked for pay in any job or business for 2 weeks or more

There was a relationship between the length of time since a person last worked for pay and the presence of young children in the household. Around 70% of persons in households with children aged 0-4 years had last worked for pay within the last 5 years compared with 44% of those in households with no children aged 0-4 years (Table 5).

**PERIOD SINCE LAST WORKED FOR PAY, WHETHER 0-4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD(a)**



(a) Worked for pay in any job or business for 2 weeks or more

## Reasons for leaving previous job and for not seeking new employment

Males and females not in the labour force (excluding those on long term unpaid leave) had different reasons for leaving their last job. For males, the most commonly reported reasons were their own long term health condition or disability (32% or 17,600), and retired/didn't want to work any longer (27% or 15,000). For females, the most common reasons were to have children (35% or 60,200), and to look after family, house or someone else (16% or 27,100) (Table 6). Of people living in households with 0-4 year old children, 69% reported having children as the main reason for leaving their last job (Table 7).

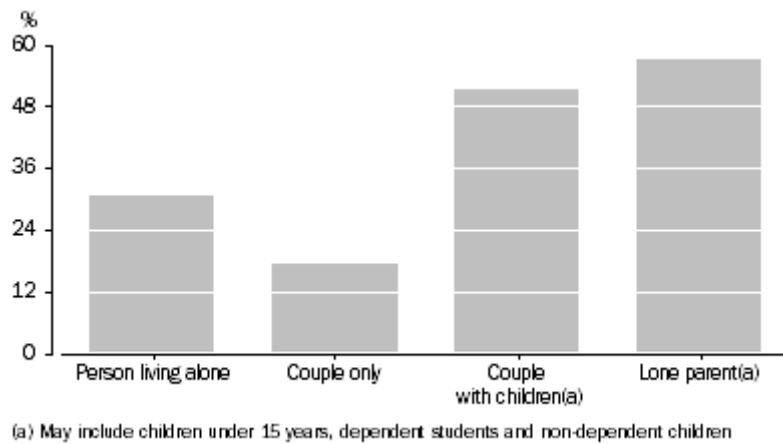
Respondents were also asked for the main reason they were not currently seeking new employment. For both males and females, the most frequently reported reason was own ill health, physical disability, injury, pregnancy or to have children (38% and 43% for males and females respectively) (Table 6).

## Employment intentions

About two in five (41%) people who were not in the labour force (excluding those on long term unpaid leave) reported that they would like to return to, or start, work, with similar proportions for males and females (40% and 41% respectively) (Table 2). The percentage was higher for those living in a household with children aged 0-4 years (59% or 43,600) than for those living in a household with no 0-4 year olds (33% or 57,200) (Table 5).

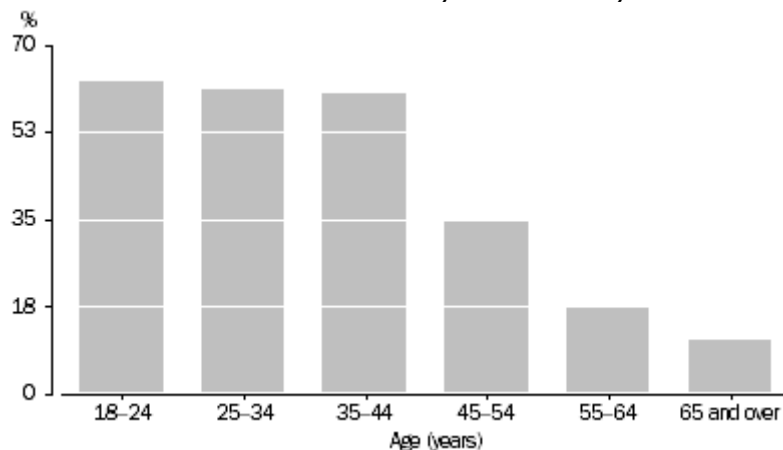
In terms of family type, the proportion who would like to return to, or start, work was highest among people in lone parent families (57%) and lowest for those in couple only families (17%) (Table 4).

## WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO, OR START, WORK-FAMILY TYPE



As shown in the graph below, the proportion who would like to return to, or start, work decreased with age, from 63% for 18-24 year olds to 11% for those aged 65 years and over(footnote 1).(Table 3).

#### WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO, OR START, WORK-AGE

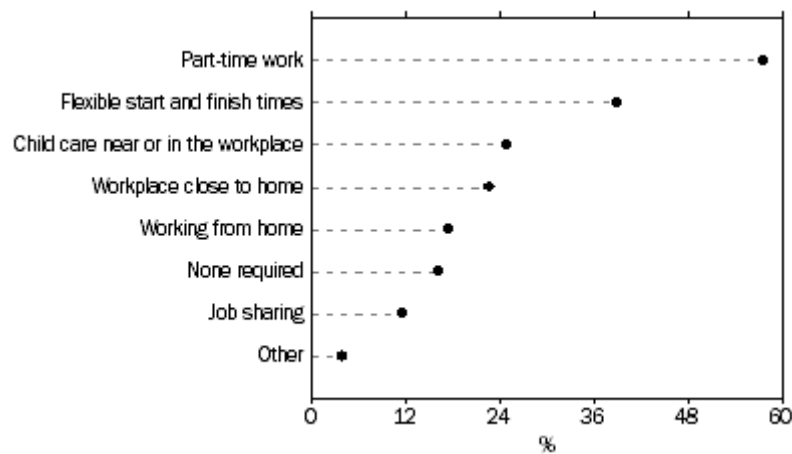


#### Special work arrangements required to return to, or start, work

Respondents were asked what arrangements were required to be in place for them to return to, or start, work. Of the 100,800 people who wanted to return to, or start, work, 16% reported that they did not require special work arrangements to do so (Table 8).

For those who required special working arrangements, the most commonly reported arrangements were part-time work (58% or 58,000), flexible start and finish times (39% or 39,200), childcare facilities available near or in the workplace (25% or 25,000) and a workplace close to home (23% or 22,900) (Table 8).

#### SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS NEEDED TO BE IN PLACE TO RETURN TO, OR START, WORK



## EMPLOYEES, AND PERSONS ON LONG TERM UNPAID LEAVE

### Demographic characteristics

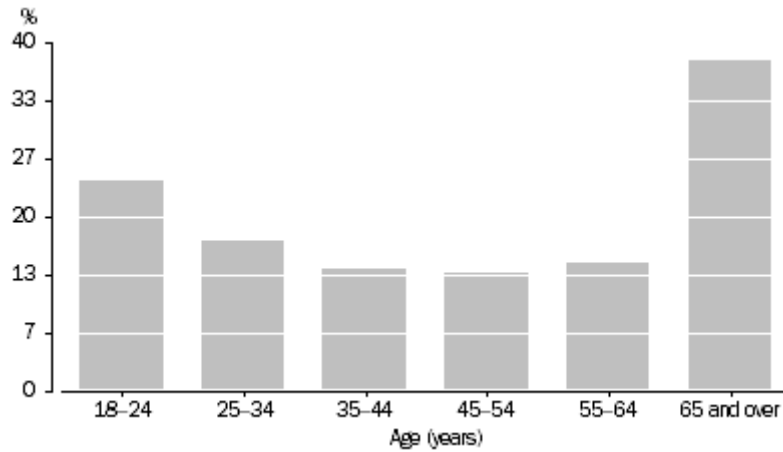
This section of the publication covers the 934,200 people who at the time of the survey were either employees, or were not in the labour force but were attached to a job because they were on long term (more than four weeks) unpaid leave. More than half (54%) were males, 49% were aged 25-44 years, and 45% were people living in couple with children families. About 47% were living in households with an equivalised annual household income of \$70,000 or more (Table 1).

### Employment characteristics

More than two thirds (68%) of employees and persons on long term unpaid leave, had been working in their current job for less than 5 years. An estimated 79% (736,000) were employed in the private sector. A slightly higher proportion (81% or 753,900) were employees with paid leave entitlements, whereas 17% (154,600) had no paid leave entitlements. The entitlement to paid leave was unknown for the remaining 2%. A higher proportion of females than males had no paid leave entitlements (20% compared with 14%). About three quarters (74% or 695,900) of employees worked full-time (35 hours or more per week) (Table 11).

Nearly one in four (24%) 18-24 year olds had no paid leave entitlements. The proportion decreased for each subsequent age group to the 45-54 years cohort which had the lowest proportion (13%). The age group 65 years and over had the highest proportion (38%) (Table 12).

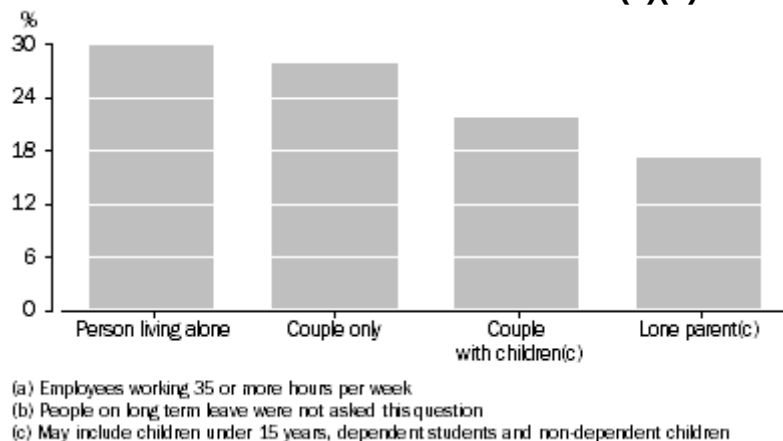
## EMPLOYEES WITHOUT PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS - AGE



### Work preferences-employees only(footnote 2)

An estimated 217,000 (23%) full-time employees indicated that they would prefer to reduce their current work hours, with the proportion slightly higher for males than females (25% compared with 21%) (Table 14). People living alone and people in couple only families, had higher proportions wanting to reduce their working hours (30% and 28% respectively) while the proportion for lone parents with children was considerably lower (17%) (Table 13).

### WOULD PREFER TO REDUCE WORKING HOURS(a)(b) - FAMILY TYPE



More than half (52% or 113,800) of those who would like to reduce their working hours reported social reasons/recreational activities/free time as the main reason for wanting to work fewer hours. A further 19% (41,000) reported a family reason as their main reason (Table 15).

### MAIN REASON FOR PREFERRING TO WORK FEWER HOURS(a)(b)

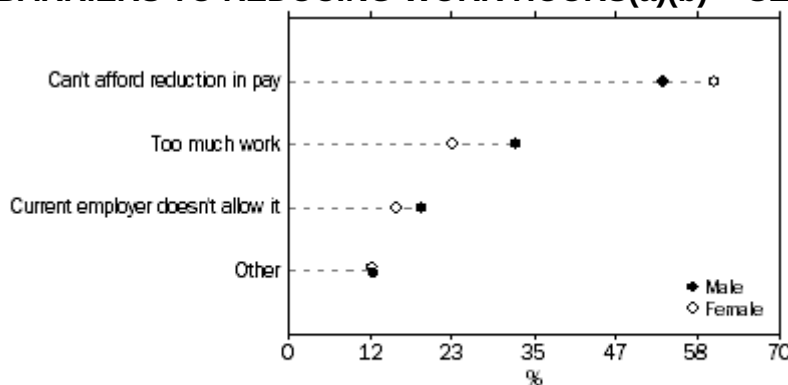




(a) Employees working 35 or more hours per week wanting to reduce hours  
 (b) People on long term unpaid leave were not asked this question

Although some people preferred to reduce their working hours, there were barriers preventing them from doing so. More than half (56%) reported a reduction in pay as a barrier. This reason was more commonly reported by females (61%) than males (53%). Conversely, a higher proportion of males (32%) than females (23%) reported that because they had too much work, they were unable to reduce their hours (Table 15). Note that respondents could report more than one barrier.

#### BARRIERS TO REDUCING WORK HOURS(a)(b) -- SEX

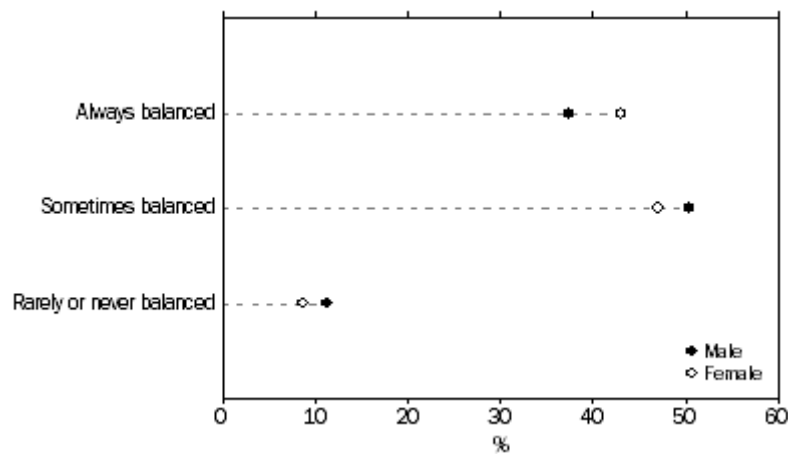


(a) Employees working 35 or more hours per week wanting to reduce hours  
 (b) People on long term unpaid leave were not asked this question

### Work-life balance

The majority of employees and persons on long term unpaid leave reported that their work and family/social responsibilities were sometimes, or always, balanced (49% and 40% respectively). A higher proportion of females than males reported that their family/social responsibilities were always balanced (43% compared with 37%). The proportion was also higher for those living outside of Perth than in Perth (44% compared with 39%) (Table 11).

#### LEVEL OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE-SEX



One in ten employees (10%) reported that their work and family/social responsibilities were rarely or never balanced. This was highest among people working in the Transport, postal and warehousing industry (20%) (Table 17).

Across occupation groups, the proportion whose work and family/social responsibilities were rarely or never balanced ranged from 8% each for Technicians and trades workers, Clerical and administrative workers, and Sales workers, to 16% for Machinery operators and drivers (Table 18).

#### WORK-LIFE BALANCE, RARELY OR NEVER BALANCED - OCCUPATION GROUP



The proportion who reported that their work-life balance was always balanced decreased with increased income, from 45% of people in households with an equivalised household income of less than \$25,000, down to 38% of those in households with income of \$110,000 or more (Table 19).

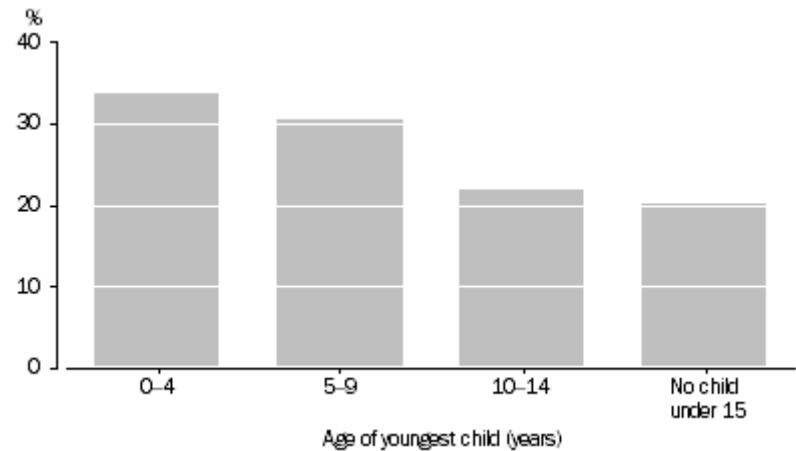
#### Requests for changes to work arrangements

In the 2010 survey, employees and persons on long term unpaid leave were asked whether they had requested changes to their work arrangements during the previous 12 months. An estimated 23% of people reported asking for change. The proportion was higher for females (29%) than males (19%) (Table 11).

People aged 25-34 years and 35-44 years had the highest proportions requesting changes to work arrangements (27% and 28% respectively). This compared with 17% for 18-24 year olds who had the lowest proportion (Table 12).

Having young children in the household was associated with requests for changes to work arrangements. Approximately one third (34%) of people in households where the youngest child was aged 0-4 years had requested changes to work arrangements. This compares with 20% of people in households with no children under 15 years of age (Table 14).

**REQUESTED CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS - AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD**



Across industries, the proportions of people who requested changes were highest for Information Media and Telecommunications (40%) and Retail Trade (32%), and lowest for Other Services (17%) and Wholesale Trade (16%) (Table 31).

The percentages across occupation groups ranged from 31% for Sales workers to 18% for Labourers (Table 32).

**REQUESTED CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS - OCCUPATION GROUP**



Nearly four in five (78% or 170,400) requests for changes to work arrangements were approved or partially approved, and 17% (36,800) were not approved. The remainder were still awaiting a decision (4%) or the decision was not known (1%) (Table 20).

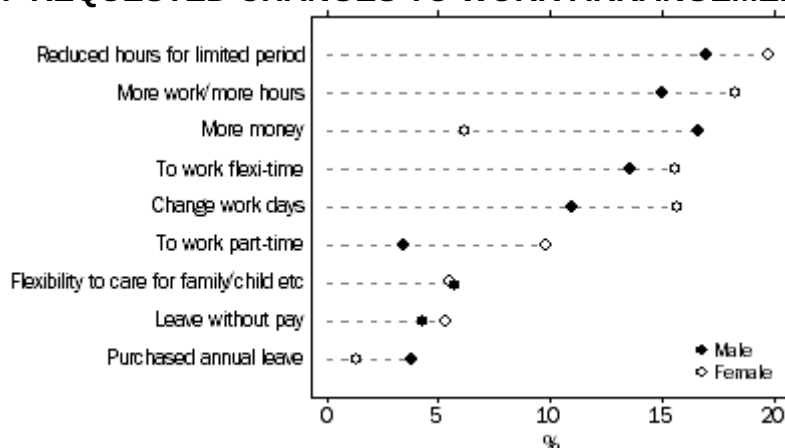
The proportion of requests that were approved or partially approved was higher among employees with paid leave entitlements than for those with no paid leave entitlements (79% compared with 73% respectively) (Table 23). The proportions were similar for people working in businesses with 20 or less employees and those in businesses with more than 20 employees (79% and 78% respectively) (Table 24).

## Types of changes requested and reasons for requests

The most commonly requested change to working arrangements by employees and persons on long term unpaid leave was for reduced hours for a limited period (40,600 or 19%). Other frequently reported requests included more work/more hours (36,700 or 17%) and to have flexible working hours (32,100 or 15%) (Table 20). Note that respondents could request more than one change.

For most requests, the proportions were higher for females than males. However, a much higher proportion of males than females requested more money (17% compared with 6%). Conversely, the request to work part-time was about three times higher among females (10%) than males (3%) (Table 20).

### TYPES OF REQUESTED CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS - SEX

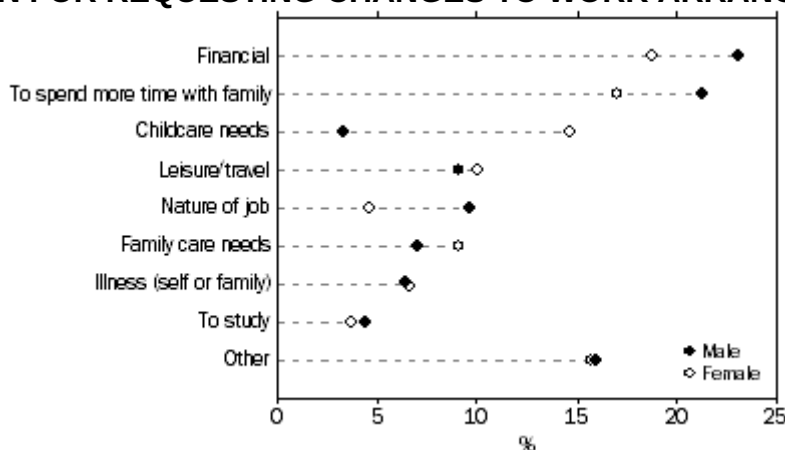


A higher proportion of employees with no paid leave entitlements requested reduced hours for a limited period than did employees with paid leave entitlements (23% compared with 18%). Similarly, the proportion that requested more work/more hours was higher among employees with no paid entitlements (22% compared with 15%) (Table 23).

Requests for reduced hours were more frequent among public sector employees than private sector employees (25% compared with 17%). Similarly, requests for more work/more hours were more common in the public sector (21% compared with 16%) (Table 22).

Among people who requested changes to work arrangements, the most commonly reported reasons were financial (45,000 or 21%) and spending more time with family (41,100 or 19%) (Table 20).

### MAIN REASON FOR REQUESTING CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS-SEX



For private sector employees, the most commonly reported main reasons for requesting changes to work arrangements were financial (22%) and to spend more time with family (21%). The comparable figures for the public sector were 16% and 13% respectively. Childcare needs were reported as the main reason for requesting changes to work arrangements by 13% of people in the public sector and 9% of those in the private sector (Table 22). The proportion was higher for people in households with children aged 0-4 years than in households with no children in this age group (29% and 4% respectively)(Table 21).

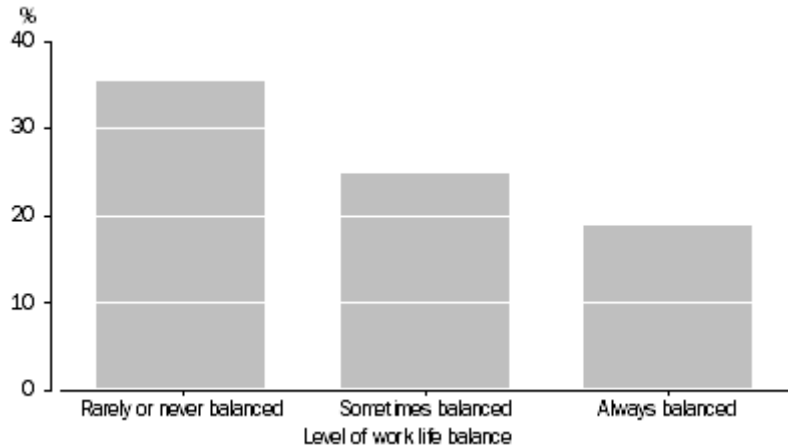
Financial reasons were more common among employees with no paid leave entitlements (28%) than for those with paid leave entitlements (19%). The proportion who reported leisure/travel as their main reason was also higher for employees with no paid leave entitlements than those with paid leave entitlements (15% compared with 8%) (Table 23).

**REASONS FOR NOT REQUESTING FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

Employees and persons on long term leave who were content with their working arrangements were less inclined to request changes. About three quarters (76% or 535,200) of employees who did not request a change to their work arrangements reported being content with arrangements as the main reason for not making a request (Table 26).

The percentage of people who asked for change was higher for those who felt their work and life responsibilities were rarely or never balanced (36% and 33% respectively) and lower for those whose work life responsibilities were always balanced (19%) or sometimes balanced (25%) (Table 30).

**REQUESTED CHANGES TO WORK ARRANGEMENTS - WORK-LIFE BALANCE**



**SUMMARY**

Flexible working arrangements have an important role in encouraging workforce participation, by improving employment opportunities for those with personal health conditions, disabilities or family/social responsibilities and encouraging a healthy work life balance. People who reported that their work and family/social responsibilities were balanced were more likely to be satisfied with their working arrangements.

The ability to choose the hours worked was a common theme among both sub-populations in the survey in terms of preferred working arrangements. For those wanting to return to, or

start, work, part-time and/or flexible working hours were required to engage them in the labour force. Similarly, the most common changes requested by employees were fewer hours and more flexible hours.

1 Persons aged 65 years and over who indicated they do not intend to return to the labour force were excluded from the survey. This does not exclude those who may at some time return to or start work. [.<back](#)

2 Persons on long term unpaid leave were not asked questions in the labour force survey about hours usually worked, so this survey was not able to ask them whether they would prefer to reduce their working hours. [.<back](#)

## About this Release

This publication aims to provide Western Australia data on: on labour force participation, flexible work arrangements and the extent to which flexible work options enable and encourage people to participate in the workforce.

## History of Changes

**This document was added or updated on 30/05/2011.**

**26/05/11** - number 217,000 replaces 21,700 (page 9 in the pdf)  
added text, (page 5 of pdf) 6% "of employees and persons on long term unpaid leave"

## Explanatory Notes

### Explanatory Notes

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication contains results from the **Western Australia (WA) Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey**, conducted throughout WA during the two weeks commencing Sunday, 10 October 2010.

**2** The survey was conducted as a supplement to the **ABS Labour Force Survey (LFS)**. The LFS is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings and a list sample of special dwellings (hotels, motels, hospitals, prisons, short-stay caravan parks, etc.). Information is obtained from the occupants of the selected dwellings by specially trained interviewers. For details of the design, scope and coverage of the LFS, users should refer to any recent edition of the ABS publication, **Labour Force, Australia** (cat. no. 6202.0) or the November 2002 edition of **Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design** (cat.

no. 6269.0).

## SCOPE

**3** The **Labour Force Survey** covered all persons who were usual residents of private dwellings and non-institutionalised special dwellings (e.g. caravan parks, hostels etc) with the exception of:

- members of the Australian permanent defence forces
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from censuses and surveys
- overseas residents in Australia
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependents) stationed in Australia
- households consisting entirely of visitors
- selections in the Indigenous Communities Frame (ICF)
- respondents in Special Dwellings (e.g. prisons, hospitals and boarding schools).

**4** The **Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey** was conducted on a subset of the full sample of private dwellings in WA that were included in the LFS.

**5** Excluded from the supplementary topic:

- persons aged 15-17 years
- persons permanently unable to work
- persons aged 65 years and over permanently not intending to work
- full time students under 25 years of age
- employers, or own account workers
- unemployed persons.

**6** Information was collected by either face to face or by telephone interview from one responsible adult per household. This adult answered questions on behalf of all persons in the household aged 18 years and over. Information was sought from an estimated 2,189 dwellings and data was obtained from 96.0% or 2,102.

## COVERAGE

**7** Coverage rules were applied to ensure that each person was associated with only one dwelling and hence had only one chance of selection in the survey.

## EFFECTS OF ROUNDING

**8** Estimates in this publication have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**9** ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very

much appreciated. Without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the **Census and Statistics Act, 1905**.

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

**10** The ABS produces a wide range of publications concerning labour statistics. Users may wish to refer to the following ABS publications which relate to the survey topic:

- **Australian Labour Market Statistics, Australia, July 2010**, cat. no. 6105.0
- **Australian Social Trends, June 2010**, cat. no. 4102.0
- **Working Time Arrangements, Australia, November 2009**, cat. no. 6342.0
- **Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009**, cat. no. 6239.0
- **Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia, Apr to Jul 2007**, cat. no. 6361.0
- **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006**, cat. no. 1292.0

**11** Current publications and other products released by the ABS are listed in the **Catalogue of Publications and Products** (cat. no. 1101.0). The Catalogue is available from any ABS office or the ABS web site <<https://www.abs.gov.au>>. The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the web site which details products to be released in the week ahead.

## Glossary

### GLOSSARY

#### Balance of WA

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) divides Western Australia into two Major Statistical Regions, namely Perth Major Statistical Region and the Balance of Western Australia. Non-metropolitan region is represented by the Balance of Western Australia Major Statistical Region. For further information refer to **Australian Standard Geographical Classification** (cat. no. 1216.0).

#### Civilian population aged 15 years and over

All usual residents of Australia aged 15 years and over except members of the permanent defence forces, certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated population counts, overseas residents in Australia, and members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

#### Couple only household

A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.



## **Couple with children household**

A couple family with children present. It can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as their number, age and dependency status. This family may or may not include other related individuals.

## **Dependent child**

A person aged under 15 years, or a 'dependent student' as defined.

## **Dependent student**

A full-time student aged 15-24 years, living in the same usual residence as his or her natural, step, foster or adoptive parent.

## **Employed**

People aged 15 years and over who during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
  - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement; or
  - on strike or locked out; or
  - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

In this publication, employed refers to people aged 18 years and over who met the above conditions, excluding employers and own account workers.

## **Employee**

A person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, a retainer fee from their employer while working on a commission basis, tips, piece rates, or payment in kind, or a person who operates their own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees.

In this publication people aged 15-17 years were excluded, as were full time students under 25 years of age, employers and own account workers.

## **Employer**

A person who operates their own unincorporated economic enterprise or engages independently in a profession or trade, and hires one or more employees.

## **Employment type**

Classifies employed people according to the following categories on the basis of their main job (that is, the job in which they usually worked the most hours):

- Employees (with leave entitlements, without leave entitlements)
- Owner managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIE)
- Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises
- Contributing family workers.

For the purposes of this survey only employees and contributing family workers were in scope.

## **Employee status**

This publication classifies employees according to whether they have leave entitlements or no leave entitlements.

## **Equivalised annual household income**

Gross annual household income as defined and adjusted using an equivalence scale to facilitate comparisons between households of different size and composition. See Explanatory Notes for more information.

## **Flexible work arrangements**

An arrangement whereby employees can alter their start or finish times, but still work the required number of hours. Includes time off in lieu.

## **Full-time workers**

Employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working fewer than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

## **Gross annual household income**

The sum from all income sources before income tax and the Medicare levy have been deducted for all members of the household over a 12 months period, for this survey, between November 2009 and October 2010.

## **Household**

A group of residents of a dwelling who share common facilities and meals or who consider themselves to be a household. It is possible for a dwelling to contain more than one household, for example, where regular provision is made for groups to take meals separately and where persons consider their household to be separate.

## **Household income**

See 'gross annual household income'.

## **Industry**

All occurrences of industry in this publication refer to Division, as classified by the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), Second Edition, 2006** (cat. no. 1292.0).

### **Lone parent with dependent children households**

A family consisting of a lone parent with dependent children as defined.

### **Long term leave**

Away from work for four weeks or more up to the end of the reference week.

### **Long term unpaid leave**

'Long term leave' as defined and not paid or expected to be paid for any part of the four weeks up to the end of the reference week.

### **One parent family**

A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the family. This family type may or may not include other related individuals.

Examples of one parent families include a 25 year old parent with dependent children and an 80 year old parent living with a 50 year old child.

### **Not in the labour force**

People who were not in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' as defined.

### **Occupation**

All occurrences of occupation in this publication relate to Major Group as defined by - **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), First Edition, 2006** (cat. no. 1220.0).

### **Own account workers**

People who operated their own unincorporated economic enterprise or engaged independently in a profession or trade, and hired no employees.

For the purpose of this publication, this category of workers was excluded as they have control in making choices relating to workforce participation and workplace flexibility.

### **Owner managers**

People who work in their own incorporated or unincorporated business, with or without employees.

For the purpose of this publication, this category of workers was excluded as they have control in making choices relating to workforce participation and workplace flexibility.

### **Owner managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIE)**

People who worked in their own incorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity which is

registered as a separate legal entity to its members or owners (also known as a limited liability company). These people are usually classified as employees under 'status in employment'.

For the purpose of this publication, this category of workers was excluded as they have control in making choices relating to workforce participation and workplace flexibility.

### **Paid leave entitlements**

Entitlements to paid sick and/or paid holiday leave.

### **Part-time workers**

Employed persons who usually worked fewer than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and did so during the reference week, or were not at work during the reference week.

### **Permanently not intending to work**

People aged 65 years and over who said they were permanently not intending to work.

### **Persons not in the labour force**

see 'not in the labour force'

### **Persons not in the labour force, excluding those on long-term unpaid leave**

People who have been away from a job for four weeks or more and have not been paid for any part of that period, are usually defined as not in the labour force.

For the purposes of this survey they have been grouped with employees.

### **Place of usual residence**

See 'region of usual residence'.

### **Preferred to work less hours**

Employees who usually worked 35 hours or more a week who would like to reduce their working hours

### **Private sector**

The private sector comprises all organisations not classified as public sector.

### **Public sector**

Public sector comprises local government authorities and all government departments and agencies created by, or reporting to, the Commonwealth, or State/Territory Parliaments.

### **Reference week**

The week prior to interview.

### **Region of usual residence**

A person's area of usual residence as classified by the Statistical Region structure in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). The classification divides Western Australia into two Major Statistical Regions - the Perth Major Statistical Region and the Balance of WA (otherwise known as the non-metropolitan region.) For further information refer to **Australian Standard Geographical Classification**, (cat. no. 1216.0) and **Information Paper: Regional Labour Force Statistics, September 1997** (cat. no. 6262.0).

## **Sector**

Classifies employed people according to whether they work for a public or private sector employer as defined.

## **Unemployed**

People aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

For the purpose of this publication, people aged 15 to 17 years have been excluded.

## **Work arrangements**

Arrangements that employees take up with their employers relating to when, where, and how they work.

## **Work-life balance**

A balance between work and family or social responsibilities. People's perception of work-life balance is very subjective and can vary from one person to the next.

## **Workplace flexibility**

Flexible working arrangements can include job sharing, telecommuting (working from home), cap on overtime, opportunity to negotiate part-time work for full-time employees, time in lieu, rostered day off, self rostering, staggered start and finish times, and/or gradual retirement.

# **Abbreviations**

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ARA	any responsible adult
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
MPS	Monthly Population Survey
RSE	relative standard error

SE	standard error
SR	statistical region
WA	Western Australia

## **(Appendix)**

### **APPENDIX**

#### **ADDITIONAL DATA AVAILABLE**

In addition to the statistics provided in this publication, the ABS can produce customised tabulations on request. Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, tabulations can be produced from the survey by cross-classifying any of the following data items for the relevant survey populations.

#### **DATA ITEMS**

##### **Place of usual residence**

Perth metropolitan area

Balance of WA

WA

##### **Sex**

Males

Females

##### **Age**

18-24 years

25-34 years

45-54 years

55-64 years

65 years or more

##### **Children**

Whether there are children in household aged 0-4 years

Age of youngest child in household

0-4 years

5-9 years

10-14 years

No child under 15 years

Dependent children

Children aged 0-4 years in household

Children aged 5-9 years in household

Children aged 10-14 years in household

Children aged 0-14 years in household

Children 0-14 years and full-time students aged 15-24 years

With children (at least one household resident aged 0-14 years)

Without children (no household resident aged 0-14 years)

Full-time students aged 15-24 years

## **Household type**

Person living alone

Couple only

Couple with dependent children only

Lone parent with dependent children only

Other household types

## **Labour Force status**

Employed

Not in the Labour Force

On long term unpaid leave

Not on long term unpaid leave

## **Persons Not in the Labour Force excluding those on unpaid long term leave**

Duration since last worked for pay for more than two weeks

Never worked for more than two weeks

Less than one year

One year to less than five years

Five years to less than ten years

Ten years to less than twenty years

Twenty years or more

Main reason stopped working in last job

Employment reasons

Employee retrenched/redundant, etc.

Job was temporary or seasonal, holiday job

Unsatisfactory work arrangements/pay/hours

Own business closed down for economic reasons

Own business closed down or sold for other reasons

Personal reasons

Retired/didn't want to work any longer

Pregnancy/to have children

Own long-term health condition or disability

To look after family, house or someone else

Have holiday/moved house/spouse transferred

Returned to studies

Other reason

Don't know

Main reason not looking for work

Personal reasons

Retired/didn't want to work any longer

Own ill health or physical disability/injury/pregnancy or to have children

To look after family, house or someone else

Studying

Does not need to work

Childcare access (availability and cost)

Family reasons

Other family considerations

Other

Don't know

Whether want to return to/start work

Yes

No

Condition/s to be in place so as to promote a return to workforce

Part time work

Job sharing

Working from home

Flexible start and finish times

Child care facilities available near or in the workplace,

Workplace close to home

Other

None required



## **Employees, and persons on long term unpaid leave - Characteristics**

### Length of employment in current job

- Less than one year
- One year to less than five years
- Five years to less than ten years
- Ten years to less than twenty years
- Twenty years or more

### Sector of employment

- Public
- Private
- Other
- Don't know

### Occupation at October 2010

- Managers
- Professionals
- Technicians and Trades workers
- Community and Personal Service workers
- Clerical and Administrative workers
- Sales workers
- Machinery Operators and Drivers
- Labourers
- Not known

### Industry of employment at October 2010

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services
- Construction
- Wholesale trade
- Retail trade
- Accommodation and Food services
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and insurance Services
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Education and Training
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts and recreation services
- Other services
- Not known

### Number of employees at place of employment

Less than 20  
20 or more

Employee status of employment

With paid leave entitlements  
Without paid leave entitlements

### **Employees only - Work preferences**

Whether want to reduce working hours

Yes  
No

Main reason for wanting to reduce working hours

Employment reasons  
Current job regularly involves long hours  
Work less unpaid overtime  
Other employment reasons

Personal reason

Own ill health/injury/disability  
Only wants/needs limited income  
Study purposes  
Social reasons/recreational activities/free time  
Other personal reasons

Family reason

Caring for children  
Unable to find suitable childcare  
Caring for ill/disabled/elderly person  
Pregnancy  
Home duties  
Other family reasons

Other

Other reasons  
Don't know

Barriers to reducing work hours

Can't afford reduction in pay  
Current employer doesn't allow it  
Too much work

No other work available  
Concern about jeopardizing career  
Other  
Don't know

### **Employees, and persons on long term unpaid leave - Work life balance**

Employee's view of work/life balance

Always balanced  
Sometimes balanced  
Rarely balanced  
Never balanced  
Don't know

### **Employees, and persons on long term unpaid leave - Requests for workplace flexibility**

Whether request for changes in work arrangements were made within the last 12 months

Yes  
No  
Don't know

Changes in work arrangements requested

Reduced hours for a limited period  
To work part time  
To work flexi time  
To work from home on a regular basis  
Purchased annual leave  
More work/more hours  
Leave without pay  
More money  
Change work days  
Flexibility to care for sick parent /child etc.  
Other  
Don't know

Main reason for making the most recent request

To spend more time with family  
Childcare needs  
Family care needs  
Illness/self or family  
To study/go to university  
Nature of job  
Financial  
Leisure/travel  
Better access to shops/banks etc

Other  
Don't know

Whether most recent request was approved

Yes  
No  
Don't know  
Partially  
Still waiting decision

Main reason most recent request refused

Not enough staff to cover absence  
Business too busy  
Job role doesn't allow for flexibility  
No reason was given  
Other  
Don't know

Main reason no requests for changes to work arrangements made in last 12 months

Content with arrangements  
Job not suitable/doesn't allow  
Too much work/too busy  
Not sure employer will allow  
Concerned with job security  
Recently started the job  
Financial reasons/pay concerns  
Not a flexible workplace  
Other  
Don't know

### **Equivalised annual household income**

Less than \$25,000

Less than \$50,000

Less than \$70,000

Less than \$110,000

\$110,000 or more

Don't know

See Explanatory Notes for further information about equivalised annual household income

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information about additional data available on request, please contact Judy Griffin on Perth (08) 9360 5935.

## Quality Declaration - Summary

### QUALITY DECLARATION - SUMMARY

#### INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

#### RELEVANCE

Each year in October the ABS conducts individual state specific surveys as part of the Monthly Population Survey (MPS) program. *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* was the October 2010 State Supplementary Survey topic for Western Australia (WA).

This survey was developed in response to a need for information on Australia's ageing population and subsequent declining labour force participation over the next 50 years. Increased labour force participation is imperative to maintain future economic prosperity. This high priority issue was raised in a report by the Productivity Commission in 2003, *Economic Implications for an Ageing Population*, which outlined government policy implications for a shrinking work-force.

Agencies that have expressed interests in the survey outcome are: The Western Australian Departments of Commerce, Communities (DFC), Treasury and Finance (DTF), the Public Sector Commission (PSC), the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC)

#### TIMELINESS

The Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, WA survey was conducted as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey in the two weeks commencing 10 October 2010.

#### ACCURACY

The number of full respondents for the *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility*, WA survey was a total of 2,096

The response rate in WA was 96.0%.

Two types of error can occur in estimates that are based on a sample survey: non-sampling error and sampling error. To assist users in understanding the estimate of these errors, relative standard errors (RSEs) are provided for every data cell in tables. For further

information please refer to the Technical Notes.

## COHERENCE

The Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility survey is not part of the ongoing ABS MPS program. Extreme caution must be used when comparing the 2010 survey with other related publications as different methodologies have been used.

The ABS has been conducting surveys on environmental issues relating to household demands placed on water, energy and transportation and has utilised a variety of sampling methods, estimation methods, concepts, data item definitions and classifications. These include:

- revision of population benchmarks
- new occupation and industry classifications implemented in 2008
- *Labour Mobility, Australia, Feb 2010*, cat. 6209.0
- *Persons Not in Labour Force, Australia, Sept 2009*, cat 6220.0
- *Underemployed Workers, Australia, Sept 2009*, cat. 6265.0
- *Working Time Arrangements, Australia, Nov 2009* , cat. 6342.0
- *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009*, cat. 6239.0
- *Labour Mobility and Intentions, Western Australia, Oct 2008* , cat. 6209.5

For other related publications please refer to Related Publications.

## INTERPRETABILITY

Information on terminology and other technical aspects associated with statistics from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey are available. These can be found in the web-based publication *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility* (cat. no. 6210.5), which contains detailed Explanatory Notes, a Technical Note and Glossary.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Data from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey, Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, WA are available in a variety of formats. The formats available free of charge on the ABS website are:

- Summary of Findings commentary and graphs
- data cubes which present a variety of data items in 32 data estimate tables with accompanying RSEs for each data item.

If the information you require is not available as a standard product, inquiries can be made by contacting the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Judy Griffin on (08) 9370 5935.

## Quality Declaration - Accuracy

### Use of directly calculated RSEs

RSEs for 2010 Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility Survey estimates are published in 'direct' form. Estimates have been calculated for each separate estimate and published individually. The Jackknife method of variance estimation is used for

this process, which involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on 30 different sub-samples of the original sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these sub samples is used to estimate the sample variability surrounding the main estimate. Previously a statistical model was produced that relates the size of estimates to their corresponding RSEs, and this information was displayed via a 'standard errors of estimates' table.

## Quality Declaration - Coherence

State supplementary survey topics vary each year. This survey is similar to a number of previous surveys with the major difference the collection of household income. A separate survey but on the same theme was conducted in QLD and Victoria for the same period (October 2010). Other related ABS publication are:

- *Labour Mobility, Australia, Feb 2010*, cat. 6209.0
- *Persons Not in Labour Force, Australia, Sept 2009*, cat. 6220.0
- *Underemployed Workers, Australia, Sept 2009*, cat. 6265.0
- *Working Time Arrangements, Australia, Nov 2009*, cat. 6342.0
- *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, Jul 2008 to Jun 2009*, cat. 6239.0
- *Labour Mobility and Intentions, Western Australia, Oct 2008*, cat. 6209.5

The *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, WA* survey was not, and is not part of the ongoing ABS survey program. Therefore comparability is not recommended and extreme caution must be used when comparing this survey with other related publications as different methodologies have been used.

## Quality Declaration - Interpretability

Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility survey is considered an irregular survey. Therefore the estimates are only available as original series and are not seasonally or trend adjusted.

Further information on terminology and other technical aspects associated with statistics from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey are available. These can be found in the web-based publication *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, WA, Oct 2010* (cat. no. 6210.5), which contains detailed Explanatory Notes, a Technical Note and Glossary.

## Quality Declaration - Accessibility

Data from the 2010 State Supplementary Survey, *Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility, WA* are available in a variety of formats. The formats available free of charge on the ABS website are:

- summary of findings, commentary and graphs
- data cubes which present a variety of data items in 32 data estimate tables with

accompanying RSEs for each data item.

If the information you require is not available as a standard product, inquiries can be made by contacting the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Judy Griffin on (08) 9370 5935.

## Publication (I-Note) - Publication

**26/05/11** - number 217,000 replaces 21,700 (page 9 in the pdf)

added text, 6% "of employees and persons on long term unpaid leave"(page 5 of pdf)

## Data Quality (Technical Note)

### TECHNICAL NOTE DATA QUALITY

#### RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

**1** Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from those estimates that would have been produced if all occupants of all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings (or occupants) was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

**2** The uncertainty in the estimate due to sampling variability, which is measured by the SE, should not be confused with inaccuracies that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and recording by interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling error, and they occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or sample. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient operating procedures.

**3** Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate:

$$RSE\% = \frac{SE}{estimate} \times 100$$

**4** RSEs for estimates from 2010 **Workforce Participation and Workplace Flexibility** survey are published for each individual data cell. The Jackknife method of variance estimation is used for this process, which involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on sub-samples of the original sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these sub-samples is used to estimate the sample variability surrounding the main estimate.

**5** Limited publication space does not allow for the separate indication of the SEs and/or RSEs of all the estimates in this publication. However, RSEs for all these estimates will be available free-of-charge on the ABS web site <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>.



**6** In the tables in this publication, only estimates (numbers and proportions) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included and are preceded by an asterisk (e.g. \*3.4) to indicate they are subject to high uncertainty and should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are preceded by a double asterisk (e.g. \*\*2.1) to indicate that they are considered too unreliable for general use.

## ESTIMATION PROCEDURE

**7** The estimates in this publication were obtained using a post-stratification procedure. This procedure ensured that the survey estimates conformed to an independently estimated distribution of the population, by state, part of state, age and sex rather than the observed distribution among respondents.

## PROPORTIONS AND PERCENTAGES

**8** Proportions formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y.

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) = \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

## DIFFERENCES

**9** Published estimates may also be used to calculate the difference between two survey estimates (of numbers or percentages). Such an estimate is subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the statistical association (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) = \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

**10** While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or subpopulations, it is expected to provide a good approximation for all differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

## SIGNIFICANCE TESTING

**11** A statistical significance test can be performed to indicate whether the survey results provide sufficient evidence that differences between survey estimates reflect an actual difference in the population. The following measure, called a "test statistic", can be used to test the statistical significance of a difference between two survey estimates. (The standard error of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula in paragraph 9).

$$\frac{|(x - y)|}{SE(x - y)}$$

**12** If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96, then we may say there is strong evidence the difference between the survey estimates reflects there is a difference in the population.

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